

VZCZCXRO6252
RR RUEHROV
DE RUEHAK #2914/01 3411127
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 071127Z DEC 07
FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 4578
INFO RUEHXX/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 002914

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SENSITIVE
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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PRELEVU](#) [EINV](#) [TU](#) [IS](#)

SUBJECT: TURKEY: PEACE UNIVERSITY TO DEVELOP ECONOMY,
UNDERSTANDING IN THE WEST BANK

REF: ANKARA 2779

11. (SBU) This cable contains confidential business information not intended for external distribution.

12. (SBU) Summary: As President Gul prematurely announced during the recent Peres/Abbas visit to Turkey, Bilkent University Rector and philanthropist Ali Dogramaci is building a "Peace University" straddling Israel and the West Bank to increase understanding and create sustainable development. Surrounded by a high security wall, the campus will house 4,500 Palestinians, Israelis, and others, who will work or study at the nursing and teaching colleges or medical facilities. Dogramaci says he has gained GOT and GOI support and will have full control over every aspect of the project. Like the Erez Industrial Zone, the Peace University is a Turkish private sector initiative designed to complement the ongoing Middle East Peace Process by strengthening the Palestinian economy. While Dogramaci's plans may seem ambitious, he has the financial resources and political connections to deliver on his promises. End Summary.

13. (SBU) After developing several community-based school projects in rural Turkey, Bilkent University Rector and Foundation Chair Ali Dogramaci was determined to find a swords-to-ploughshares approach to the Israel-Palestine conflict. His answer -- a "Peace University" straddling Israel and the West Bank. Envisioned as more than a college, Dogramaci explained to us that the Peace University will be a community where Israelis and Palestinians will work and live together in a secure environment and provide desperately needed services to the local Palestinians. Since beginning his project in August 2006, Dogramaci told us he has lobbied ruling and opposition parties in Turkey and Israel to successfully gain political buy-in. He claimed that Benjamin Netanyahu initially objected to 3,000 Palestinians residing on Israeli soil, but extended his support contingent on maintaining the highest level of security. In reciprocity, Dogramaci will build a second, larger university in the West Bank to provide services to neighboring Israelis.

14. (SBU) Dogramaci has fully developed his vision. A large security wall encircling the campus will include two heavily guarded entrances; one opening into Israel and the other to the West Bank. In addition to the nursing and teaching colleges, Dogramaci plans to build a 200-bed state-of-the-art hospital and an adjacent hotel of equal capacity for the patients, families. The faculty, administrators, students, staff, and their families, including 3,000 Palestinians, 800 Israelis, and 700 Turks, Europeans, and North Americans, will live together in modern high-rises. Support facilities will include restaurants and shops as well as primary and secondary schools for the employees' children. Dogramaci also envisions a mosque, synagogue, and chapel located in a central quad. University students will gain on-the-job training at the medical facilities and schools. Outside the West Bank wall, Dogramaci has planned a 1,000-2,000 capacity

outpatient clinic to provide medical services to local Palestinians at market prices. Contingent on GOI case-by-case approval, the clinic could transfer patients requiring additional treatment to the hospital within the walled campus.

¶5. (SBU) Working with the GOI, Dogramaci said he has identified a property adjacent to the north-west tip of the West Bank. The GOI extended qualified industrial zone (QIZ) status to the area, providing Dogramaci with full autonomy over the project. Dogramaci plans to use companies owned by Bilkent University's foundation to build and secure the facility. He has, he stated, already begun to personally recruit the faculty from top institutions around the world. Should any resident not abide by the principles of peaceful coexistence, under the parameters of a QIZ, Dogramaci can fire without question. He plans to make his first trip to the site in January and begin construction of his 'university upon a hill' shortly thereafter.

¶6. (SBU) Comment: The Dogramaci family has a long history of education-based philanthropy. In 1984, his father,s foundation established Bilkent, Turkey,s first private university. After assuming the position of rector in 1993, Dogramaci parlayed his family,s wealth and political influence into a series ambitious projects, many requiring the amendment of Turkish law. He is dedicated to the creation of the Peace University, which he plans to name after his father, and has taken the necessary steps to remove any potential political road blocks. While his projects may seem ambitious, Dogramaci has always delivered. End Comment.

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